

from Hodges. George
Captain Myles Standish

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By George Hodges

THE baptismal register of Chorley Church, in Lancashire, contains a leaf which nobody can read.

The entries which precede and follow are plain enough: ink was good in the sixteenth century. But this blind leaf presents so worn and dim an aspect that they have reason on their side who claim that fingers more hasty and tangible than those of the hand of time have touched it. It looks as if the records of 1584 and 1585 had been intentionally rubbed out. It is a common guess that one of the names thus unhappily erased was that of Myles Standish. (Winsor's History of Duxbury, p. 97.)



At all events, the name is gone, and with it has disappeared the necessary proof to establish the claims of the Standishes of America to the pleasant possessions of the Standishes of Standish. That such a claim has reasonable foundation, appears in Myles Standish's will, in which "I give," he says, "unto my son and heir apparent, Alexander Stan-

dish, all my lands as heir apparent by lawful descent in Ormistick, Boosconge, Wrightington, Maudsley, Newburrow, Cranston, and in the Isle of Man, and given to me as right heir by lawful descent, but surreptitiously detained from me my grandfather being a second or younger brother from the house of Standish of Standish."

The house of Standish was of good antiquity, and had possessed its Lancashire estates for centuries. The origin of the name is involved in the obscurity which is unfortunately common to origins. There is a rumor that in the uneffaced pages of the Chorley register is the ancient name of Milo Standanaught, Milo being plainly from the Latin for "soldier," and Standanaught meaning "Stand-at-nothing," and there are those who guess that from these sturdy syllables came the name of the Puritan captain. On the other hand, the armorial bearings of the family are "an azure shield with three standishes argent;" and the word "standish," thus used, is simply stand-dish. In the dictionaries this dish is used for pens and ink. Dean Swift speaks of his silver standish. But in the *London Times* report of Queen Victoria's coronation mention is made of standishes upon the altar meaning silver plates or patens. Thus they appear upon the family shield.

Standish, however derived, was the name. Thurston de Standish, who was living in 1222, is the eldest recogniz-

able ancestor; his son was Ralph, and Ralph's sons, living in 1306, were Hugh and Jordan. These two divided the estates between them, and their families became respectively the Standishes of Duxbury and the Standishes of Standish. (Winsor, pp. 2, 96.) The family houses of Standish and Duxbury are pictured in Johnson's *Exploits of Myles Standish* (pp. 1, 12). They are dignified, large, square buildings, surrounded by trees and extensive grounds. Standish Hall is reproduced from a photograph and may show the place as it is at present. The house is connected by a timbered corridor with a chapel which has a cross at the gable. Duxbury Hall is copied from a painting, without date; deer are grazing on the lawn, and a group of gentlemen on horseback are standing by the porch.

The two branches of the family chose different sides in the religious contentions which presently disturbed the land. The Standishes of Duxbury accepted the Protestant reformation; the Standishes of Standish continued in the unreformed religion.

The Catholic Standishes took a lively part in the disturbances of the time. Henry Standish, a Franciscan friar and bishop of St. Asaph sided with Queen Katherine in the matter of the divorce. And when the contention between the reformed and the unreformed religion was renewed, late in the 17th century, in the time of James the Second, the Standishes of Standish were enthusiastic Jacobites; and it was at Standish Hall that the "Lancashire Plot" was made for the King's restoration.

This connection of the family with the Roman religion has given rise to

an interesting theory that Myles Standish was a Roman Catholic. It would be pleasant to have this theory confirmed. That Standish was not a member of the Plymouth church is commonly asserted. Dr. Jeremy Belknap, in his *American Biography* (1794; vol. 2, p. 311), says in so many words, though without reference to authority, that he was "not a member of their church"; and he presently quotes from the manuscript of the Rev. William Hubbard's *History of New England* (1679): "He had been bred a soldier in the low countries, and had never entered into the school of Christ, or of John the Baptist." This, indeed, may mean no more than that the writer did not approve of the captain's martial activity; for he adds, "or, if ever he was there, he had forgot his first lessons, to offer violence to no man." (Belknap, vol. 2, p. 329). Still, it is more likely that he intended to make apology for Standish on the ground that he was not a church member. That was twenty years after Standish's death. Hubbard was therefore a contemporary; and, though he lived at Ipswich, he would not be likely to be mistaken in regard to an ecclesiastical position so exceptional, at that time, as Standish's.

Accordingly, there appear two facts: first, that Standish's family was of the Roman Catholic faith; and, secondly, that Standish himself did not belong to the Puritan church. Was he a Roman Catholic?

It is certain that Myles Standish fought in the Netherlands on the Protestant side in a war which was essentially a war of religion.

It is certain that he cast in his lot with the Puritan emigrants, and was

ever trusted and esteemed by them. They hated papists. Bradford, in his *History of Plymouth Plantation*, shows how they felt even about the Church of England, how they detested "ye ceremonies, and servise booke, and other popish and unchristian stuffe." (p. 6.) Winthrop, in 1640, noted it as a thing worthy of observation that his son "having many books in a chamber where there was corn of divers sorts, had among them one wherein the Greek Testament, the Psalms and the Common Prayer were bound together. He found the Common Prayer eaten with mice, every leaf of it, and not any of the other two touched, nor any other of his books, though they were above a thousand." (Winthrop's *History*, ed. 1853, p. 24.) It is true, of course, that Winthrop belonged to a straighter sect than the neighbors of Standish; still, even in Plymouth, especially after a residence in the land of William the Silent, a Roman Catholic would have been a most unwelcome citizen.

It is certain that Myles Standish's library, as appears in the inventory made at his death, was as Protestant as a lot of books can be. It was like the collection of an orthodox country parson,—Calvin's *Institutions*, Preston's *Sermons*, Burrough's *Earthly-Mindedness and Christian Contentment*, Dod on the Lord's Supper, a reply to Dr. Cotton on Baptisme, Sparkes *Against Heresie*, Ball on Faith, Nature and Grace in Conflict, together with "Three olde Bibles," not one of them in the Douay version. (N. E. Hist. & Gen. Register, vol. I, p. 54.) It is true that some of these excellent books may have been presented to him in Leyden by Pastor Robinson, or in Plymouth by Elder Brewster, for the

improving of his mind and the saving of his soul; but it is more likely that he bought them himself. That is what he liked to read. The battles of the theologians pleased his martial mind. There is evidence on those shelves of a serious disposition and a religious spirit, but there is no smallest trace of any divergence from the opinions common in Plymouth. Not one of those books could have stood consistently upon a Roman Catholic shelf.

We may reasonably infer from such facts as these that Myles Standish, who was by family a Roman Catholic, by baptism, in Chorley Church, an Episcopalian, and by association a Puritan, was a person of independent mind who did not further commit himself. That he was a Roman Catholic, either in practice or in opinion during his life in Plymouth, there is not the least ground for belief.

The life of Standish is divided into two almost exactly equal portions by the sailing of the *Mayflower*. Born, so near as we can tell, in 1584, he died in 1656. The year 1620 is midway between these dates precisely. Of the first half of his career, scarce anything is known. Morton, in his *New England's Memorial* (ed. 1826, p. 262), tells us all that he knows about it in half a sentence. "In his younger time," he says, "he went over into the low countries, and was a soldier there, and came acquainted with the church at Leyden."

The lad became a soldier, naturally. The surreptitious detaining of his inheritance indicates family dissensions, and it may have been the discomfort or compulsion of them which drove him from home. He was probably glad to go. It was a day of adventure. Men

who had no cause for which to fight at home went abroad seeking occupation for their swords. It was Sir Philip Sidney who said, "Wherever you hear of a good war, go to it;" and he had himself followed his own advice, going into the Netherlands for the joy of the fray. Young Standish's mind would respond to this gallant counsel: to the wars he went.

Spain and Holland were still fighting. In 1584, the year of Myles's birth, William the Silent was assassinated. In 1604, Elizabeth having died, and James having succeeded her upon the throne of England, the English force which had been helping Holland was withdrawn. As Standish was at that time but twenty years of age, it is plain that he had not seen any extended service. The most notable military event at that time was the siege of Ostend, which came to an end in that year. It is a fair guess that the young soldier had a part in that foolish tragedy. Of the "three muskets, four carbines, two small guns, one fowling piece, a sword, a cutlass and three belts" (Winsor's *Duxbury*, p. 54) some, it is likely, were used in this campaign, and were tried upon the Spaniards before they were directed against the Indians. It was probably at this time, also, that he purchased his copies of "Cæsar's Commentaries" and "Bariffe's Artillery," which he could hardly have desired for counsel in his dealings with the Massachusetts or the Narragansetts.

The swords are still shown, one in Boston and the other in Plymouth, which are said to have belonged to him. The Plymouth sword, in Pilgrim Hall, has an Arabic inscription on its blade, which carries its history out of the

bounds of knowledge into the camps of that Moslem enemy who even in Standish's time was menacing and molesting Europe. It may easily have belonged to some pirate Turk, taken in his ship in the English channel, and have been sold by its captor. Myles probably bought it at second-hand. Unlike his predecessor, Captain John Smith, he had no personal encounters with men whose speech was Arabic.

The Boston sword, which is in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, is supposed by Mr. Winsor (*Duxbury*, p. 98) to be the one which Alexander Standish inherited, and was handed down to Alexander's grandson, John Standish of Plymouth, from whom it was borrowed on a training-day by a careless neighbor, who never carried it back. In 1849, Mr. Winsor was informed by Mr. Moses Standish, of Boston, that he had seen in the house of this Captain John Standish a coat of mail which had belonged to his great-grandfather. "It was a cloth garment, very thickly interwoven with a metallic wire, so as to make it extremely durable, and scarcely penetrable. The suit was complete, including a helmet and breast-plate."

In 1604, when England and Spain professed to be friends, it seemed as if there would be no further use for these weapons offensive or defensive. In 1609, however, two events took place which determined where young Standish's taste for war should find gratification. One was the establishment of a general peace. In the west of Europe, the contending armies, Catholic and Protestant, made a truce of twelve years; in the east of Europe, other contending armies, Chris-

tian and Moslem, agreed to fight no more for almost twice that length of time; thus Standish's profession offered him no future in Europe: no prince would buy his sword. The other event was the removal from Amsterdam to Leyden of a little company of English Puritan refugees. Thus, in this year, or later, Standish came into acquaintance with Robinson and Brewster, and with Carver and Bradford and Winslow. When the Puritans began presently to look across the sea, he naturally bethought himself of Walter Raleigh and Lyon Gardner and John Smith and Ferdinando Gorges, companions in arms with him, who, being in his condition, without employment, had found occupation and adventure in the new world. He cast in his lot with the emigrating congregation.

The Puritans had, indeed, found Leyden "a fair and beautiful citie, and of a sweete situation," and had especially appreciated the advantages of living in the neighborhood of its university. "For that they should be liable," they said, "to famine and nakedness, and ye wante, in a maner, of all things. The chang of aire, diate, and drinking of water would infecte their bodies with sore sickness and greivous diseases. And also those which should escape or overcome these difficulties, should yett be in continual danger of ye salvage people, who are cruel, barberous and most trecherous, being most furious in their rage and merceiles when they overcome: not being content only to kill and take away life, but delight to torment men in ye most bloodie maner that may be; fleeing some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting of ye members and

joynts of others peesmeale, and, broiling on ye coles, eate ye collops of their flesh in their sight whilst they live; with other cruelties horrible to be related." (Bradford's History, pp. 33, 34.)

This was not a cheerful prospect, but the truce between Holland and Spain was nearly over,—the twelve years ending in 1621,—and the Indians, they may well have thought, could not be much worse than the Spaniards. Other reasons also impelled them. They desired to have a country of their own, where they might bring up their children to be religious English folk. They determined to seek an abiding place in the wild lands across the sea.

In the meantime, Myles Standish had been getting married. Somewhere,—tradition says, in the Isle of Man,—he had found a young person named Rose, who was willing, under the safe covert of his protection, to brave the possible horrors of New England. Standish was now thirty-six years old, being arrived at the middle year of his life.

Longfellow tells us how he looked:
 "Short of stature he was, but strongly built
 and athletic,
 Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with
 muscles and sinews of iron;
 Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet
 beard was already
 Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges
 sometimes in November."

That is as near as we can come to it. He was short of stature. Master Morton, of Merry Mount, in his New English Canaan, wrote satirical descriptions of the colonists, and called Captain Standish, "Captaine Shrimpe." "Had we been at home in our full number," he says, recounting how Standish

invaded and arrested the mischievous household, we "would have given Captaine Shrinpe (a quondam Drummer) such a wellcome as would have made him wish for a Drumme as bigg as Diogenes' tubb, that he might have crept into it out of sight. (New English Canaan, Prince Soc. ed., p. 286). So, too, the Indian Pecksuot told him, "though he were a great captain, yet he was but a little man." (Winslow's Good News from N. E. in Arbus' Story of the Pilgrim Fathers, p. 568). William Hubbard, also, already quoted, said, "A little chimney is soon fired; so was the Plymouth captain, a man of very little stature, yet of a very hot and hasty temper." (Young's Chronicles of Mass., p. 34).

There is no authentic portrait of Standish, though the picture in the Standishes of America suits the part well. It shows a sturdy person in the stiff ruff of the period, with full black beard, and a look of stout determination in his eyes. But the compiler tells us that nothing is definitely known about this portrait prior to the year 1812. It is true that Standish was in England in the year 1625, when the picture is dated. But the times were not such as to suggest the painting of portraits; money was uncommonly scarce, and London had the plague. The Pilgrims did not sit for their pictures. The walls of their houses did not present suitable backgrounds for the hanging of paintings in oil.

"Wednesday, the sixth of September, the wind coming east, north east, a fine small gale, we loosed from Plymouth (the English Plymouth), having been kindly entertained and courteously used by divers friends there dwelling; and after many dif-

ficulties in boisterous storms, at length, by God's Providence, upon the 9th of November following, by break of day, we espied land; which we deemed to be Cape Cod, and so afterward it proved." (Mourt's Relation, in Arber, p. 407). The year was 1620, and the dates, being "old style," need to be increased by ten to bring them into proper position in our present calendar.

Two days later, after perilous encounters with "dangerous shoals and roaring breakers," in a vain attempt to make what is now the harbor of New York, they dropped anchor near the end of Long Point, and not far from the present village of Provincetown. They found themselves in a circling bay "compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pines, juniper, sassafras, and other sweet wood, and so capacious that therein "a thousand sail of ships may safely ride." The water, however, was so shallow that they could not come near the shore by "three-quarters of an English mile." They had to wade "a bow-shot or two" in "going aland," thereby getting such coughs and colds as made them ill-prepared for the rigors which awaited them. (Mourt's Relation, Arber, p. 408).

In the cabin of the *Mayflower*, lying then at Provincetown, they drew up a notable compact in which they agreed to combine themselves together into a civil body politic, and by virtue thereof to make laws to which they promised all due submission and obedience. The sixth name signed to this document was that of Captain Myles Standish. (Morton's New England's Memorial, p. 38).

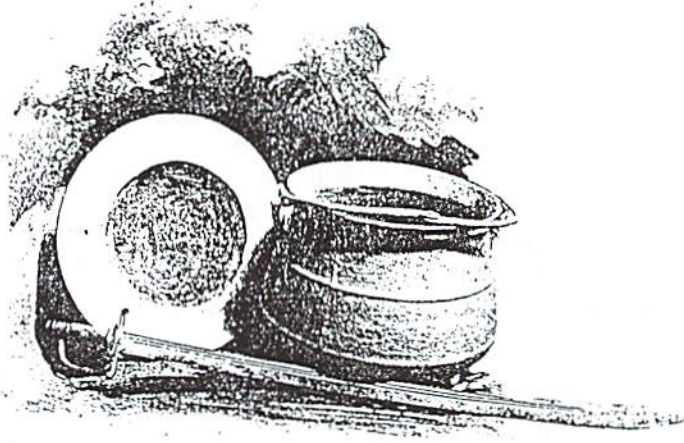
Thus the new life began, under No-

vember skies. "Being thus passed ye vast ocean," writes Bradford in his *History* (p. 95), "they had now no friends to wellcome them, nor inns to entertain or refresh their weatherbeaten bodys, no houses or much less townes to repaire too, to seek for succoure. . . . And for the season, it was winter, and they that know ye winters of that cōtrie know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruell and fierce storms, deangerous to travill to known places, much more to serch an unknown coast."

The first task was exploration, and the first mention of Standish is as the leader of an expedition. "And so with cautions, directions and instructions, sixteen men were sent out, with every man his musket, sword and corselet, under the conduct of Captain Myles Standish." They ordered themselves in "a single File," and marched for a mile by the sea, without meeting with any adventure, when at last they saw five or six persons with a dog coming towards them, who when they espied this army of invasion, ran into the woods whistling the dog after them. Standish and his men followed these citizens, but were not able to overtake them, for they "ran away with might and main." Thus they went for ten miles, following their footprints. Then it grew dark, and they built a camp-fire, and, setting a guard, bestowed themselves for the night. The next day, they went on through the woods, making their way through boughs and bushes which, as they reported, tore their very armor in pieces. About ten in the morning, being then in what is now Truro, they found a spring, "of which," they said, "we were heartily glad, and sat us down and drank our

first New England water with as much delight as ever we drank drink in all our lives." That day they found some planks laid together, where a house had been, and a ship's kettle, "brought out of Europe," and near by in sand heaps a store of corn, "some yellow, and some red, and some mixed with blue; which was a very goodly sight." Of this they helped themselves, filling the kettle and their pockets. (*Mourt's Relation*, Arbor, pp. 411-414). So they made their way back to the ship, with some difficulty, getting lost in the woods, and seemed to their companions as fairly laden as the men from Escholl. Eight months after they met the owners of this corn, and paid them for it. This find of corn they called the First Discovery.

On Wednesday, the 6th (16th) of December, another exploring expedition, consisting of ten men and led as before by Captain Standish, started in search of a proper place for the settlement. The weather was very cold, the water freezing on their clothes, and making them "like coats of iron." They went by water, in the shallop, landing now and then and making expeditions into the cōuntry. In the middle of the second night, as they lay on shore by their fire, they heard "great and hideous cry," and shot off a couple of muskets, at which the noise ceased, and they judged it had been made by wolves or foxes. But about five o'clock the next morning, having had prayers and preparing breakfast, the cry sounded again, and one of the company came running in, shouting "They are men! Indians! Indians!" And the sentinel was followed by a flight of arrows. The arms had already been carried to the boat, but



SWORD, POT AND PLATTER BELONGING TO MYLES STANDISH, NOW IN PILGRIM HALL, PLYMOUTH

Standish had a snap-hance ready—a gun with a flint lock—and he made a shot, and presently the others were ready; the Indians meanwhile keeping up their dreadful cry. "Woach!" they screamed, "Woach! Ha! Ha! Hach! Woach!" sounding not unlike a college yell. Finally, their leader "gave an extraordinary cry; and away they went all." None of the Englishmen had been hit by the discharge of arrows, nor do they record having wounded any Indian. They followed the retreating savages a little space, and shouted "all together several times, and shot off a couple of muskets; and so returned. This we did that they might see we were not afraid of them nor discouraged." (Mourt's Relation, Arbor, pp. 431-433). Thus ended the First Encounter.

Then, giving God thanks, they set sail again, looking for a harbor to which the ship's pilot had directed them; he had been there once, he said, and the savages had stolen his har-

poon; he called it Thievish Harbor. Now it began to snow and rain and blow, and the sea was very rough. The rudder broke; the mast was split in three pieces. At last, after a day of peril, they "fell upon a place of sandy ground," on the shore of a small island. There they stayed till morning; and the next day being Sunday, they said their prayers and sang their hymns on Clark's Island, as we call it. "On Monday they sounded ye harbor and founde it fitt for shipping; and marched into ye land and found diverse cornfields and little running brooks, a place (as they supposed) fitt for situation; at least, it was ye best they could find, and ye season and their present necessitie, made them glad to accepte of it. So they returned to their shipp again with this news to ye rest of their people, which did much comforte their harts." (Bradford, p. 106.)

Thus is the landing recorded, without adjective or exclamation. The

date was December 11, or by our reckoning, the 21st, piously kept as "Forefathers' Day." No rock is mentioned, but as there is no other rock in the immediate neighborhood of their getting ashore, there is no reason to doubt that they set their feet on the boulder of tradition. It has been debated whether John Alden or Mary Chilton were the first to land; but that event was later, when the *Mayflower* followed the shallop's course into Plymouth Bay. Let us hazard the conjecture that Myles Standish, being the leader of this expedition, was himself the first to stand on "the threshold of the United States."

The First Encounter had made the Pilgrims thankful that they had a military man among them. They were now expectant of an Indian attack. Among their domestic and religious preparations for the winter, they did not neglect those important, and, as they thought, necessary precautions for which Standish was responsible. After two months of anxiety, during which they sometimes saw great smokes of Indian fires, but never an Indian, it happened at the end of February, that "Captain Myles Standish and Francis Cooke being at work in the woods, coming home left their tools behind them, but before they returned they were taken away by the savages." The next day, "in the morning," says the record in Mourt's Relation, "we called a meeting for the establishing of military orders among ourselves; and we chose Myles Standish our captain, and gave him authority of command in affairs. And as we were in consultation hereabouts, two savages presented themselves upon the top of a hill, over against our

plantation, about a quarter of a mile and less, and made signs unto us to come unto them; we likewise made signs unto them to come unto us. Whereupon we armed ourselves and made ready, and sent two over the brook towards them, to wit, Captain Standish and Steven Hopkins, who went towards them. Only one of them had a musket, which they laid down on the ground in their sight, in sign of peace and to parley with them. But the savages would not tarry their coming. A noise of a great many more was heard behind the hill, but no more came in sight. This led us to plant our great ordnance in places most convenient." (Mourt's Relation, Arbor, p. 449).

Meanwhile, in January and February, of the company of settlers, half had died. "In ye depth of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts, being infected with scurvie and other diseases, which their long voiage and their inacomodate condition had brought upon them," they died, "sometimes two or three of a day." On the 5th of February, Rose Standish died. "Scarce fifty remained," says Bradford, "and of these in ye time of most distress there was but six or seven sound persons, who, to their great comendations be it spoken, spared no pains, night nor day, but with abundance of toyle and hazard of their own health, fetched them wood, made them fires, dressed them meat, made their beds, washed their lothesome cloths . . . and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren." "Two of these seven were Mr. William Brewster, their reverend Elder,

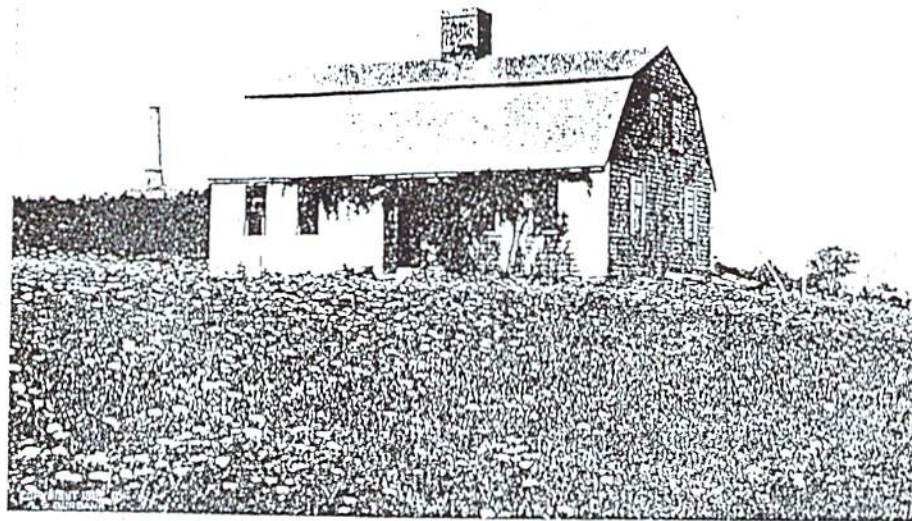
and Myles Standish, their Captain and military commander." (Bradford, p. 111).

In this forlorn condition was the settlement, many dead and most of the others sick, the sea before them and the menacing forest behind, when on the Friday morning of a "fair, warm day" in March, there came in boldly "all alone and along the houses," a naked savage, crying "Welcome!" Samoset was himself but a visitor in these parts, being from Maine, where he had learned some English from the fishermen; he was able, however, to give much information. He explained the hostility shown to Standish in the First Encounter by the fact that Captain Hunt, an English shipmaster, had stolen twenty-seven men from those shores and carried them to Spain to sell as slaves. He said that one of these captives, named Squanto, had got to England, where he had lived in London for some years with a merchant in Cornhill, and had finally made his way home. And he told the story of the Great Plague. Standish learned that they who had been feared as enemies, against whom he had established on the hill his Minion and his Saker, and his Bases—stout cannon all—were themselves vanquished, broken and almost exterminated by pestilence. Presently, Samoset brought Squanto; and Samoset and Squanto procured a conference between the Pilgrims and Massasoit, their nearest neighbor.

Massasoit had prudently prepared himself for the interview by getting "all the Powacks of ye countrie, for three days together, in a horid and livellish maner to curse and execrate them with their cunjurations, which assembly and service they held in a

darke and dismall swampe." (Bradford, p. 119). He now came forward, Captain Standish and Master Allerton meeting him at the brook, with half a dozen musketeers. He was conducted to a house then in building, where were placed a green rug and three or four cushions. The Indian king and the Puritan governor kissed each others' hands. Then "the governor called for some strong water and drunk to him; and he drunk a great draught, that made him sweat all the time after." (Mourt's Relation, Arbor, p. 457). So they made a treaty of peace, assuring Massasoit that so long as he kept it "King James would esteem of him as his friend and ally." The next day Standish and Allerton "venturously" returned the Indian's visit, and were regaled with ground-nuts and tobacco.

In spite of this polite beginning, the Pilgrims never got on well with the Indians. The contrast, in this particular, between the two colonies founded by religious persons and for religious purposes—Plymouth and Pennsylvania—is very marked. William Penn lands upon the site of Philadelphia and finds a company of Indians. They receive him cheerfully, give him food, and entertain him with games, skipping and jumping. Penn skips and jumps with them, and they are all fraternally merry together. Myles Standish lands on Cape Cod, forms his men in single file, all in armor and carrying guns, and presently the Indians raise a great cry and come upon them with arrows. Penn had no gun. The only man harmed by the Indians of Pennsylvania during a long course of years was one who owned a gun. The Pilgrims came out with a full



THE STANDISH HOUSE, DUXBURY

equipment not only of muskets but of cannon. This was probably due to Standish's counsel; he looked after the munitions of war. It is possible that if Standish had not been of the company, and the settlers had come as peaceable and friendly folk, they might have established the same relations with their savage neighbors as prevailed in Pennsylvania.

On the other hand, it appears that a hostile feeling had preceded the settlement of Plymouth. The Indians of those parts had already learned to esteem white men as enemies. They had a tradition that the great plague came from a Frenchman's curse. They remembered Hunt, the kidnapper. It is likely that had it not been for Captain Standish, the Pilgrims, landing under such conditions, among Indians of a more savage temper than those of Pennsylvania, and justly enraged,

would have been summarily cut off. As it was, they had several narrow escapes. So that it may fairly be said that Standish saved the colony. Without him it might have met the fate of other, worse defended, settlements.

The Plymouth people had now three valuable Indian friends—Massasoit, the sachem; Squanto, the interpreter; and Hobamack, one of Massasoit's warriors, a man of might. Squanto and Hobamack became accepted members of the settlement. They cast in their lot with the white men. They were very jealous, the one of the other; and Squanto, by a childish trick, which was meant to show that he was the best friend of the white men, came near to getting the settlers into serious trouble with Massasoit. But they were faithful friends, both of them, and even their jealousy was turned to account by taking Squanto into Governor

Bradford's house, and Hobamack into Captain Standish's, at which convenient distance they competed which should do the colony most good. Squanto taught the settlers how to fish and plant, and served as guide and adviser. He materially assisted Standish's defensive measures by informing the Indians that the English had the plague buried in a pot under the ground, whence they were likely to bring it on the least provocation.

In August, 1621, Corbitant, one of the neighbors of Massasoit, having refused to sign the treaty of peace, seized Squanto, saying that now the English had lost their tongue. Standish felt that hesitation, or even forbearance, would now be fatal. Straight he marched with fourteen men into Corbitant's town, beset the chief's house, and without serious bloodshed brought back the interpreter in safety.

In September, with nine men of Plymouth, and Squanto for pilot, Standish sailed up into Boston Bay. They spent a night in their open boat in the lee of Thompson's Island, and in the morning landed on the peninsula, whose name of Squantum preserves the memory of their friend. The event is commemorated by a monument bearing the inscription:

CAPTAIN MYLES STANDISH,
With his men, guided by the
Indian Squanto, landed here
September 30, 1621.

Here they found a pile of lobsters, freshly caught, on which they made their breakfast, paying for them, according to their honest custom, when they met the owners. Presently, they found the "governor," named Obbatinewat, who lived, as they ex-

pressed it, "in the bottom of the Massachusetts Bay." Obbatinewat, who was much afraid of his visitors, told them how he lived in terror not only of the Tarratines, a savage people dwelling to the north, but of the Squaw Sachem, a lady of the immediate neighborhood, who was continually attacking him. The Pilgrims looked about the country, crossing over to what is now Charlestown, and marching inland to what is now Medford and Winchester. Every camp was abandoned upon their approach. All the warriors hid themselves in the woods. The great plague had not only broken their strength, but had destroyed their nerve. They had no spirit left. The visitors found many squaws, but missed the Massachusetts Queen. They came away with two impressions of Boston: First, that it was inhabited mainly by women; and, secondly, that it was the most beautiful place which they had found in all their travels. So they returned to Plymouth, with a fair wind and a light moon. (*Mourt's Relation*, Arbor, pp. 483-487).

In December, the Narragansetts of Rhode Island, the most formidable of their neighbors, sent a messenger with a bundle of arrows lapped in a rattlesnake's skin. Standish detained the messenger until they should learn what these symbols meant. When it was found that they threatened war, the men of Plymouth stuffed the skin with powder and shot, and returned polite regrets to the Narragansetts that the English had no suitable boats in which to make them a visit, adding that if the Narragansetts cared to come and make the first call themselves they might be sure of a warm reception. The Narragansetts sent back the pow-

der and shot, and did not come. But the Pilgrims, knowing how much stouter their defiance was than their defence, set a strong line of palings about the settlement, with gates to lock at night, and Captain Standish divided the men into four companies, and summoned a "general muster." (Winslow's *Good News from New England*, Arbor, pp. 517-520).

The most serious peril came, however, from another direction. Myles Standish, after the "first encounter," fought but a single battle with the Indians. Even that was no battle, in the sense of a contention between considerable companies of men, but a sharp and sudden fight, hand-to-hand. And it was fought in the neighborhood of what is now Boston.

In the summer of 1622, Master Weston, a money-making person, of London, who had been concerned in the sailing of the *Mayflower*, established a colony at Wessagusset, near the present Weymouth. It was a trading venture, and the colonists were most of them "rude fellows," as Weston himself called them: "stout knaves," was the name which Master Morton called them, being an associate with them.

Food was very scarce both at Wessagusset and at Plymouth; and this scarcity the new colonists increased by foolishly paying the Indians as much for a quart of corn as the Plymouth people were wont to pay for a skin of beaver. The two settlements sent out a joint expedition that fall in search of food; Standish being in command, and Squanto acting as interpreter. The weather was very bad, and the boat was several times forced back into port. Standish fell sick of a fever,

and gave up the command to Bradford.

Presently at Chatham, on the back side of Cape Cod, Squanto was suddenly taken sick and died. At last, having secured some corn, Bradford and his party left the Wessagusset people to bring the food to port, and walked home, fifty miles, preferring that to the company of their neighbors. Even then, the supply was not sufficient, and there was hunger in both colonies.

Under these hard circumstances, the men of the new colony so conducted themselves as to cause the Indians to lose both fear and respect of them. In their straits, they sold the Indians their clothes and bed-coverings. "Others (so base were they) became servants to the Indians, and would cutt them woode and fetch them water for a cup full of corne; others fell to plaine stealing, both night and day, from ye Indians, of which they greevously complained." (Bradford, p. 157). Thus the Indians began not only to hate but to despise them. They daily insulted the planters. "Yea, in ye end," says Bradford, "they were faine to hang one of their men, whom they could not reclaim from stealing, to give ye Indians contente." Master Morton, in his *New English Canaan*, says that they put the stout thief's clothes upon another of their company who was sick and not likely to live, and hanged the sick man in the well man's place. (N. E. Canaan III., ch. IV). It is the story which Butler tells in *Hudibras*:

"Our Brethren of New England use
Choice malefactors to excuse,
And hang the Guiltless in their stead,
Of whom the churches have less need;
As lately, happened: In a town
There lived a cobbler, and but one

That out of Doctrine could cut Use,
 And mend men's lives as well as shoes.
 This precious Brother having slain,
 In times of peace, an Indian,
 (Not out of malice, but mere zeal,
 Because he was an Infidel)
 The mighty Tottipottymoy
 Sent to our Elders an envoy,
 Complaining sorely of the breach
 Of league held forth by Brother Patch,
 Against the articles in force
 Between both churches, his and ours,
 For which he craved the Saints to render
 Into his hands, or hang th' Offender;
 But they maturely having weigh'd
 They had no more than him o' the' trade,
 (A man that served them in a double
 Capacity to teach and cobbler),
 Resolved to spare him; yet to do
 The Indian Hoghan Moghan too
 Impartial justice, in his stead did
 Hang an old Weaver that was bed-rid."
Canto II., lines 409-436.

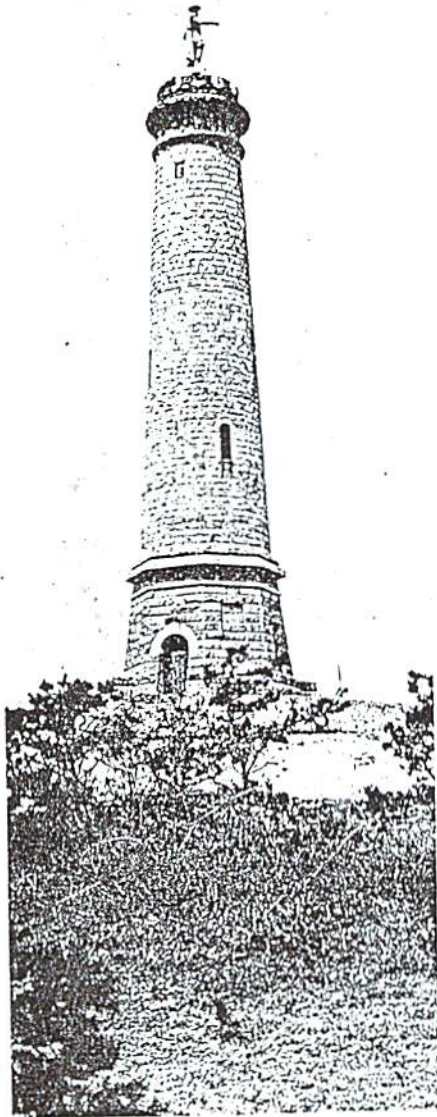
The right man was hanged, but even this did not give "ye Indians contente." They made a plot to exterminate the white men. Few in number themselves, they sent messengers to the Narragansetts, to the Cape Cod tribes, and, in short, to all their neighbors in the forest, and arranged for a general massacre. It was such a plan as had destroyed, a year before, a colony much larger and stronger in Virginia. Winslow went to see Massasoit, who was sick, and either by application of simple remedies or by turning out the native doctors with their tom-toms, recovered him to health; and Massasoit disclosed the plot.

Standish, at the same time, went on another expedition to Cape Cod for corn, and met with a cold reception from Indians who had before been friendly. He found Witummat there, a Massachusetts Indian, who flourished a knife, and made a wild speech, insulting the Captain. That night, one of the savages insisted on sleeping in

Standish's lodging, making great protestations of friendship. The night was bitterly cold, and partly by reason of the weather, partly from anxiety and suspicion, the Captain took no rest, "but either walked or turned himself to and fro at the fire." The Indian asked him why he did not sleep, and he answered that "he knew not well; but he had no desire at all to rest." So the perilous night passed. (Good News, Arbor, p. 546).

No sooner had Winslow and Standish returned with these ill tidings than Phineas Pratt suddenly appeared from Wessagusset, covered with snow, fainting with fear, hunger and weariness and pursued by Indians. He brought information that the plot was on the eve of execution.

Standish took eight men with him and proceeded straight to the heart of the peril. Nobody in the colony knew the Indians as he did. Winslow says that he could understand their language better than any of the others. He knew that under the circumstances conciliation would be impossible. It was a hard case. The Indians had a good deal of right on their side. A company of vagabonds gathered from the corners of London streets made most unpleasant neighbors, whom even the Pilgrims could not endure. It was natural enough that the Indians should resolve to get rid of them, and natural enough also that they should fail to make a fine discrimination, and should include all the people of pale face under one ban. On the other hand, the lives of the Plymouth settlers were at stake, and the great cause for which they stood was in peril. Standish saw clearly that there was but one way out, and he took that way.



MYLES STANDISH MONUMENT

Being arrived at the stockade, at Wessagusset, the captain found the colonists weak and frightened and the Indians bold and insulting. Wituamet showed a sharp knife, having a woman's face pictured on the handle. "I have another at home," he said,

wherewith I have killed both French and English, and that hath a man's face on it; and by-and-by those two must marry." Pecksuot, also, a man of great size, taunted Standish on his short stature.

The next day, being the sixth of April, 1623, they came again, these braves and a few others, the leaders and inspirers of the plot. They were allowed to enter the block-house. Suddenly, Standish gave a signal, and upon the instant leaped on Pecksuot, seized the knife which hung at his neck and stabbed him with it. Each of his four or five companions attacked another savage. The door was fastened and for a few tragic moments, without groan or cry, the struggle went on. When the door was opened, the men who were the heart and hands of the conspiracy were all dead. On the day after, there was a brief skirmish in which Hobamaek put the remaining warriors to flight.

When Pastor Robinson in Leydon heard of this encounter he was much grieved thereat, and besought the church to consider the disposition of their captain, who was of a warm temper, adding also, in words applicable to other campaigns of nearer date, "O how happy a thing had it been that you had converted some before you killed any." There is no doubt, however, but that Standish, by thus taking the lives of a few, saved the lives of many, both Englishmen and Indians. It was the only blood which the Captain shed. Thereafter his name alone was as terrible as an army with banners.

One of the original settlers at Wessagusset was Thomas Morton. Morton was a London lawyer, an ardent

sportsman and lover of nature. Massachusetts delighted him. Its "many goodly groves of trees, dainty, fine, round, rising hillocks, delicate, fair, large plains, sweet crystal fountains, and clear running streams," with fruit and flowers and "lilies of the Daphnean tree," made the land seem to him like Paradise. He returned to England before winter came to change his mind, and before the Wessagusset people entered into their misfortunes. Presently, Captain Wollaston, fitting out an expedition, Morton came back with it; and after some months, Wollaston and most of his party having moved to Virginia, Morton put himself at the head of the half-dozen who remained.

The settlers established themselves at Passonagessit, within the limits of the present city of Quincy. There they built their house on the summit of one of those gentle hills which Morton liked so much, looking out over Boston Bay. They had two purposes; one was to trade with the Indians for skins, the other was to have as good a time as was possible under the circumstances. Their pursuit of these purposes made them excessively obnoxious to all their prudent and serious English neighbors. Morton, indeed, with his boisterous ideas of pleasure and his frank dislike of Puritans, represented everything that was objectionable in politics, in religion and in manners. Bradford says that he "became lord of misrule and maintained (as it were) a school of Atheism" (p. 285). Mr. Fiske, in his *Beginnings of New England*, suggests that the accusation of atheism was "based upon the fact that he used the Book of Common Prayer" (p. 91). That Morton

used the Prayer Book, he himself asserts. "Mine host," he says, meaning himself, "was a man that endeavored to advance the dignity of the Church of England, which they (on the contrary part) would labour to vilifie with uncivile terms: conveying against the sacred Booke of Common Prayer and mine host that used it in a laudable manner amongst his family, as a practise of piety." Mr. Charles Francis Adams, in his *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*, thinks it likely that Morton somewhat exaggerated his churchmanship in order to get the favor of Laud in the troubles which he presently had with the Puritans. The combination of fervent piety with Morton's marked devotion to "barrells of beare" and "lassies in beaver coats" is to say the least improbable. And the spectacle of Master Morton reading the Morning Prayer with his companions at Merrymount passes imagination. There is at least no doubt but that in his trading with the Indians, he sold them guns and ammunition. That, of itself, made him a mischievous citizen. Every colonist's life was endangered.

On a May-day of 1627, the men of Merrymount set up a may-pole. "We brewed a barrell of excellent beare," says the chief offender, telling his own story, "and provided a case of bottles, to be spent, with other good cheare, for all comers of that day." And we "brought the Maypole to the place appointed with drummes, gunnes, pistols and other fitting instruments for that purpose; and there erected it with the help of salvages, that came thether of purpose to see the manner of our Revels." (*New English Canaan*, p. 276). So they danced about it, the white men

and the braves and the lassies in beaver coats, and were as merry as the day was long.

This the "precise separatists that lived at New Plymouth" found a "lamentable spectacle." Twice they wrote to Morton, but he answered with high words. The situation became so serious that all the settlers up and down the neighboring coasts were concerned. If the Merrymount proceedings continued, the residence of decent people in those parts would become impossible. Finally Myles Standish was sent out to arrest the offending household. He took eight men with him—a number which he seems to have preferred in the face of danger or difficulty—and laid hold on Morton as he was on a visit to Wessagusset. But in the night Morton got away. They had him sleeping between guards; but the guards slept sounder than he did. Suddenly a door slammed and they awoke to find him gone. "The word," he says, "which was given with an alarm, was—O, he's gon!—he's gon! What shall wee doe, he's gon!—the rest (halfe a sleepe) start up in a maze, and, like rams, ran their heads one at another full butt in the darke. Their grand leader, Captain Shrimp, took on most furiously, and tore his clothes for anger to see the empty nest and their bird gone. The rest were eager to have torne their haire from their heads: but it was so short, that it would give them no hold."

Standish and his men started in pursuit, and found Morton and two companions entrenched at Merrymount, well armed with guns but too drunk to use them. Thus they were captured, and brought down to Plymouth; whence Morton was presently shipped

to England, where he wrote his *New English Canaan* and in various ways, at the court of Charles I., did what he could to make trouble for the colony.

Meanwhile, the captain had comforted himself in his hardships and responsibilities by a second marriage.

The earliest account which I can find of the romantic tradition which is associated with Standish's memory is in the Rev. Timothy Alden's collection of *American Epitaphs* (1814, Pentacle I., Vol. III., page 265). Mr. Alden says that he had the story from those to whom it had been carefully handed down. "In a very short time after the decease of Mrs. Standish, the Captain was led to think that if he could obtain Miss Priscilla Mullins, a daughter of Mr. William Mullins, the breach in his family would be happily repaired. He therefore, according to the custom of those times, sent to ask Mr. Mullins' permission to visit his daughter. John Alden, the messenger, went and faithfully communicated the wishes of the captain. The old gentleman did not object, as he might have done, on account of the recency of Captain Standish's bereavement. He said that it was perfectly agreeable to him, but the young lady must also be consulted. The damsel was then called into the room, and John Alden, who is said to have been a man of most excellent form, with a fair and ruddy complexion, arose, and in a very courteous and prepossessing manner, delivered his errand. Miss Mullins listened with respectful attention, and at last, after a considerable pause, fixing her eyes upon him, said: "Prithee, John, why do you not speak for yourself?"

The captain's second wife was Bar-

bara, whose other name is unknown, a passenger by the Ann. Presently, he settled on his land at Duxbury, having the Captain's Hill in the middle of his farm, now crowned by his tall monument. Here he built him a house, wherein he lived to the end of his days. Here he gathered his children about him, his six boys—Alexander, Charles, John, Myles, Josiah and a second Charles (Standishes of America, p. 7), and his daughter, Lora. The little daughter's sampler is in Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth.—

"Lora Standish is my name.

Lord, guide my heart that I may do thy will:

Also fill my hands with such convenient skill

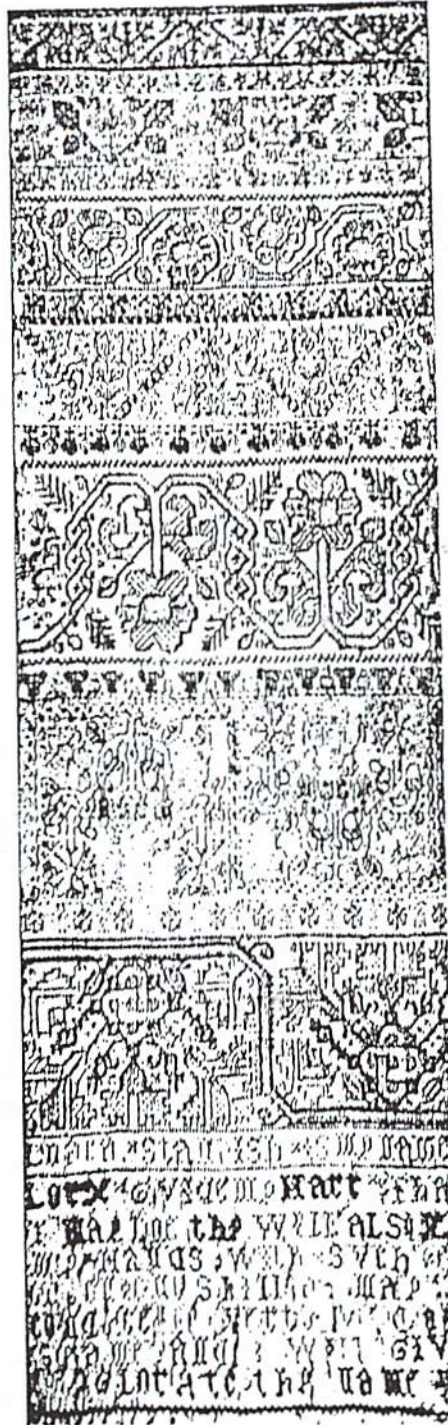
As will conduce to virtue void of shame.

And I will give the glory to thy name."

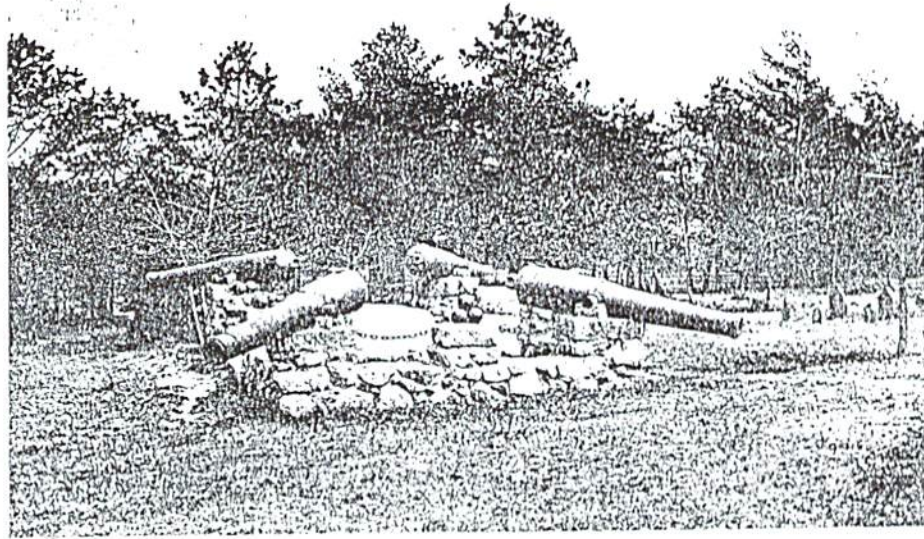
Alexander Standish married Sarah Alden, daughter of John and Priscilla.

The captain continued all his life in the military command of the colony. Once he went to fight the French, who had interfered with the Plymouth trade on the Penobscot river, but it was a fruitless expedition. Again, he prepared to fight the Dutch, when there was war between England and Holland in 1652, but peace was declared before colonial hostilities began. The Narragansetts raised a force to attack the settlements, and the captain led the Plymouth company, which marched with the men of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Haven to meet them; but the Indians did not fight.

Standish took part also in the civil affairs of the colony. For twenty years he was one of the governor's assistants. Once he went, as agent of the plantation, to England, where he be-



THE SAMPLER OF LORA STANDISH



GRAVE OF MYLES STANDISH

gan the negotiations by which later he and seven others bought out all the interests of the Merchant Adventurers in the Plymouth Colony for £1,800. The year, however, was a bad one. Even within sight of England, the companion to Standish's ship was captured by the Turks, and passengers and crew sold into slavery. Affairs of state were in disorder, and the plague was in possession of London. It was no time to do business, and Standish returned, having borrowed £150 at 50 per cent. interest.

Lowell, in his "Interview with Miles Standish," sits before the fire at twilight looking reflectively upon a chair beside him, which had been conveyed to these shores in the good ship Mayflower.

"It came out in that famous bark
That brought our sires intrepid.
Capacious as another ark
For furniture decrepit."

And as the logs burn low, and the

poet's thoughts go back to those old days which we have been considering, behold the chair is occupied; he sees

"—its trembling arms enclose

A figure grim and rusty,
Whose doublet plain and plainer hose,
Were somewhat worn and dusty."

and he wonders who his guest may be.

"Just then the ghost drew up his chair
And said 'My name is Standish.'"

Whereupon ensues a sturdy conversation, in which the captain speaks his mind on the subject of compromise with slavery.

Thus he sat in his declining days, looking out over the green country which his strong arm had helped to win, reading his Homer's Iliad with an appreciation which in these gentler days we miss, consulting now his "Country Farmer," and now his "Position's Practice," according to the emergency, bucolic or domestic, studying his "History of the World," in whose continuing chapters he should

have a place; and on Sundays refreshing his soul with Borroughs' "Gospel Conversation" and the martial psalms of David.

There is a touch of tenderness in the words of the old man's will, which seems for a moment to be foreign to the grim spirit of him who stabbed Pecksuot, and nailed the head of Wituwamat to the wall of the meeting-house. But the captain had a warm heart, ever. He loved his friends with an enduring and solicitous affection. We may not forget his faithful nursing in the first tragic winter. He desires that his body may be laid "as

near as conveniently may be to his two dear daughters, Lora his daughter, and Mary, his daughter-in-law. He commends his dear and loving wife, Barbara Standish, to the Christian counsel and advice of his dear friends, Mr. Timothy Ratherly and Captain James Cudworth. "Further, my will is that Marcy Robenson, whom I tenderly love for her grandfather's sake, shall have three Pounds."

So he died, on the 3rd day of October, 1656, with the regard of all who knew him, having rendered inestimable service to the cause of religion, of freedom and of humanity.

Remote

By Charles Hanson Towne

SOMEWHERE, perchance, there is a love
That one day I may gain;
But oh, it is so very far
Through darkness and the rain!

And yet more distant than the dream
Of joy that still may be,
Is that old love gone softly down
The aisles of Memory!